

Mosul schools reopen doors

Story and photo by
Spc. Aaron Ritter
139th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq – Nearly 1,300 children are returning to school after the Al Janeen and Al Bayariq primary schools celebrated the end of renovations during a ribbon cutting ceremonies April 18.

The projects, funded by the Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid program, is part of the Coalition forces' continuing efforts to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure.

"The Army's intent is to have Iraqis control and manage all of their ministries," said Maj. Terrance Evans, 416th Civil Affairs Battalion. "With the Department of Education's involvement in this project, we are well on our way to a smooth transition come June 30."

June 30 is the date sovereign-



An Al Janeen Primary School student cuts a ribbon to celebrate the completed renovation of the school, which remained closed for nearly a month.

ty will be transferred to the Iraqi people.

The \$10,000 Al Janeen project included the construction of new bathrooms for students, painting of the entire

school, renovation of teachers' bathrooms, installation of new windows and new lighting and ceiling fans for all the classrooms. Firas Bureau Company, a local Iraqi contractor, com-

pleted the renovations.

Shokoat Hajah, headmaster of Al Janeen school, said the nearly 900 students at his school were lacking the encouragement to learn because of the bad condition of the school.

"This 'new' place gives the students more motivation to learn after the restoration project," Hajah said of the school, which has been closed to students for nearly a month.

Similar improvements, including the installation of new steel doors and septic tanks, kept the Al Bayariq school closed for about three weeks. Work was completed by KRA, a local contractor, and cost \$14,000.

Many teachers and students voiced concerns about the school and are grateful for the renovations.

Enain Tahar, a fine arts teacher at the Al Janeen school,

said the school was in bad shape. On occasion, the plaster would fall down around the children.

"The renovations recently made to the schools will provide a safer, healthier and cleaner learning environment for the children," Evans said. "This should allow the teachers to focus more on teaching versus safety."

Salwa Agwel, assistant headmistress for Al Bayariq school, said the renovations will help the teaching staff to better educate over 400 first through sixth graders at her school.

"It gives the students a more comfortable learning environment to work in," Agwel said.

The Coalition forces are committed to working side by side with the people of Iraq to increase education standards, which is a cornerstone of the free society that Iraq is becoming.

The 84th Division "Railsplitters" History

The 84th Division has a history that reaches back to Abraham Lincoln and the Black Hawk Indian War of 1832. The Division patch is a symbol of that legacy and shows an ax splitting a log for a rail fence - hence the nickname "The Railsplitters."

Officially, the 84th Division was not formed until Aug. 5, 1917, during World War I. At that time it was a combat infantry unit composed of men from the states of Wisconsin, Kentucky and Illinois. The new division trained for 13 months before it was sent to Europe. But instead of entering the fight as a unit, it was split up to provide replacement personnel for other units. Many individual members became heroes during this period.

The Division was disbanded after WW I. It was not reactivated until 1942, after the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II.

On Nov. 10, 1944, the Division landed in France and was rushed to the front in Belgium. It was the first unit to smash the northern section of Germany's dreaded Siegfried Line.

When the German Army began its last great counter offensive, the 84th Division again blocked the path. In freezing cold and snow, Gen. Von Rundstedt threw the German Army at the 84th again and again. But the Division held its ground in what became known as "The Battle of the Bulge".

After the war, the 84th Division came home to Wisconsin, as part of the U.S. Army Reserve. In 1947, it was designated as an Airborne Reserve command. Later in 1959, it was redesignated as a Training Division for Infantry and Artillery. Its mission later included armor and artillery training.

On Jan. 21, 1991, a portion of the 84th Division was mobilized in support of Operation Desert Storm. More than 500 Railsplitters reported to Fort Sill, Okla., along with equipment and weapons systems to provide refresher training to several thousand reactivated Individual Ready Reservists. On March 22, 1991, after achieving tremendous success, the Railsplitters returned home.

As the result of a reorganization in 1993, the 84th Division (TNG) merged with the 85th Division (TNG) and expanded its area of operation to include Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Iowa.

The 84th Division (Tng) provided refresher training in June 1994 for 41 Army Reservists who were deployed to the Sinai in 1995 as part of the U.S. contribution to

the Multinational Force Observer Sinai Peacekeeping Operations in Egypt from January through July 1995.

In April 1995 the Division become an institutional training division, again expanding its area of operation to include Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska.

A subsequent reorganization in August 1995 expanded the traditional missions of the Division (IT) units to include peacetime and mobilization school training of individual soldiers. The reorganization also shifted the command and control of U.S. Army Reserve Forces schools from the former Army Reserve commands to the divisions (IT). The 84th Division assumed responsibility for 14 USARF schools in Region E, comprised of Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Meanwhile, the training model that matches mission to unit and individual soldier qualification has been implemented. Selected units perform initial entry

training missions augmenting active forces at Forts Jackson, Knox and Sill. Others perform skill level one and two training at Ft. McCoy,

Wis., while others have participated in counterpart training at Ft.

Hood, Texas. The quality of the 84th Divisions support has consistently exceeded active components expectations. Last year, 13 Army Achievement Medals by the active component counterparts, and numerous letters of commendation — to a force of only 43 soldiers — was awarded as a result of the 84th Division support to its mobilization station, Ft. Hood, Texas.

During the 1990's, the 84th Division has become an integral force at the U.S. Military Academy where soldiers wearing the Railsplitters patch regularly assist in training the best and brightest future officers of the Army. Both NCOs and Junior officers are sent by the 84th Division to train West Point Cadets in a variety of military subjects at the academy.

Today, the 84th Division headquarters is located in Milwaukee. The Division currently has eight brigades. Three brigades conduct initial entry training while the remaining four school brigades train in a wide variety of subjects including; combat support Military Occupational Specialty training, health services MOS training, and professional development training.

On March 23, 1997, Wisconsin State Highway 33 was officially dedicated as the Railsplitters' Memorial Highway. The formal ceremony paid tribute to the thousands of men and women who have served and sacrificed over the years and recognized the efforts made by those who continue to serve today.

Information gathered from www.usarc.army.mil



Army Civil Affairs Teams Help Rebuild Neighborhoods in Iraq

Story by
Staff Sgt. Tony Sailer
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq - On Feb 22nd, the CPA allocated a \$1.1 million budget for each of the nine beladiyahs (districts) for neighborhood improvement projects. The "Baghdad Beautification" money must be committed to projects by June 15th and spent by June 30.

"Despite the recent increased violence in and around Baghdad, the Iraqi people still want us involved in helping them restore their communities," Maj. Jacqueline Castro, a civil affairs project officer with the 1st Cavalry Division said.

The coalition is involved in reconstruction and repair projects that continue to improve living conditions for average Iraqi citizens.

One way they do this is through the "Baghdad Beautification" funding Castro said. These funds are intended to quickly identify and address

the projects with the most need, value, and impact.

"We want to make a big difference," Castro said. "The beauty of this program is that it gets local Iraqis involved."

According to Lt. Col. James Hutton, the 1st Cav. Div. spokesman, "Iraqis working in this program have cleaned streets, removed debris, renovated schools, made playgrounds, constructed sewer piped, installed water pumps, built soccer fields, renovated government buildings and hospitals and developed irrigation systems for farmers."

"Our goal is to assist the Iraqis as they work to improve every aspect of their lives," Hutton said.

The process starts when Civil Affairs teams go out into the community and help

District Advisory Councils brainstorm a list of projects and then the DAC decides on the most appropriate projects to concentrate on.

"Our main thrust is to allow the nine District Advisory Councils to take ownership of

these projects," Castro said. "As we approach June 30th, it is important that we shape a mindset that encourages the local leadership to take over these projects. Soon they will be in charge of their own destiny."

For example, the 39th Brigade Combat Team is helping their local DAC renovate the Al-Adhamiya DAC compound with just over \$30,000 to fix the public meeting place. "It needed lots of cleaning up, road leveling, paving and painting," Castro said.

Likewise, in the Al Mansour district, Baghdad Beautification funds were used to build and landscape a security wall around the Womens' Opportunity Center. A civil affairs team from the 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., worked in cooperation with the non-governmental organization, Women for Women International, to build a wall that will add to the centers protection.

"Safety and security are high on our list of requirements," Castro said.

Iraq in Brief

Task Force Danger Soldiers capture anti-Coalition suspects, weapons caches

TIKRIT, Iraq - Task Force Danger Soldiers detained 19 anti-Coalition suspects and captured three weapons caches in north central Iraq April 24.

Soldiers detained 17 suspects near Tikrit around 11:54 a.m. as they loaded fuses into a truck containing 30 mortar and artillery rounds. More than 2,400 additional rounds were found buried nearby.

Soldiers detained another two suspects near Tikrit around 1 p.m., confiscating 60 mortar and artillery rounds.

Finally, Soldiers found and destroyed a cache of artillery rounds near Dibis around 3:19 p.m.

The suspects were transported to Coalition facilities for questioning.

Task Force Olympia Soldiers detain 14, destroy IED, confiscate weapons

MOSUL, Iraq - Task Force Olympia Soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) detained 14 people wanted for anti-Coalition activities, destroyed an improvised explosive device and collected a variety of weapons and munitions in Northern Iraq April 23.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment conducted cordon and searches in the northeast neighborhood of Hashimiyah and detained 14 people wanted for planning and conducting attacks against Coalition forces. During the searches, IED-making materials were discovered and confiscated.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment discovered an IED on a road leading out of northern Mosul. Iraqi Police secured the site and the IED was destroyed. No injuries were reported.

Members of the Coalition for Iraqi Unity, a concerned group of citizens in northwestern Iraq, approached Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry west of Tall Afar near the Syrian border and turned in a large cache of weapons consisting of 351 100mm artillery rounds, 12 82mm mortar rounds, 10 hand grenades, five rocket propelled grenade launchers and one SA-7 rocket.

The same unit reported another weapons turn-in by an Iraqi citizen in Tall Afar that consisted of five 120mm mortar rounds, 22 60mm mortar rounds and five 60mm mortar tubes.

New Funding Allocated for Civil Affairs Projects in Fallujah, Ramadi

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - The Coalition Provisional Authority approved \$10 million each for the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi Saturday. An additional \$25 million for each city is in the final stages of the approval process.

The funding for Fallujah and Ramadi will go toward projects such as building bridges, improving health care and water treatment, as well as renovating schools, electrical plants and roads. CPA officials, Coalition forces, the governor of Al Anbar and the Al Anbar Provincial Ministers worked hand-in-hand to allot the money to the most critically needed services and infrastructure.

Several civil affairs projects are underway in Ramadi. Similar projects will begin in Fallujah upon significant improvement of the security situation there.

Coalition forces continue to work with Iraqi Police Service and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps in Fallujah. The immediate goal is to restore police services to the city so projects can continue in a safe and secure environment.

The IPS and ICDC continue to assume greater responsibilities in Fallujah. The ultimate goal is a stable society facilitated by Iraqis for Iraqis.

Iraqi Dinars risky investment

Story and photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Bill Sutherland
Coalition Press Information Center

BAGHDAD, Iraq— On October 15, the new Iraqi Dinar currency became available to the public. At that time, one United States dollar equaled 2000 Iraqi Dinar. In the seven months that have followed, the currency is up, trading at about 1100-1350 Iraqi Dinar per U.S. dollar. This has led some servicemembers to believe that the currency might be a sound investment. However, invest-

ment advisors will tell you that there are always things to consider before investing in currency.

"First, you have to be here in Iraq to buy and sell the currency, since banks overseas and stateside don't trade in that currency," said Fred Buhler, Financial Advisor for the Ministry of Finance.

Another aspect would be if the new Iraqi government changes the currency again or if the currency actually becomes devalued.

Finally, Buhler said, "if you consider going to Las Vegas and can afford losing money there, then and only then should one consider investing in currency here," said Buhler. He added that investing in Iraqi currency is risky because they have huge developmental needs and at sometime Iraq will have to repay the loans taken out to rebuild their country.

Financial advisors noted that an investor could lose money if the Iraqi Dinar is re-evaluated in a few years.

A presidential order signed last year removed sanctions against Iraqi investments. U.S. citizens are now allowed to invest in currency, stocks, bonds, real estate and businesses in Iraq.

Legally, according to Iraqi Law an individual is only allowed to remove up to 5000 Iraqi Dinar, or the equivalent of \$3.50 from the country.

However, according to United States Air Force 1st Lt. Rico Johnson, Law and Order Officer at the Provost Marshall Office at Camp Victory, "the highest amount of currency U.S. citizens can take back to the United States is \$10,000 - worth of New Iraqi Dinars." Otherwise if it's over that amount, Johnson said, customs has to be notified.



The new Iraqi currency, the Dinar, was distributed to the public Oct. 15, 2003.

Mapmakers modernize trade

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Bill Sutherland
Coalition Press Information Center

CAMP VICTORY - Baghdad, Iraq
— Military mapmakers of the 555th Engineer Company from 3rd Corps, Fort Hood, Texas have come a long way since their predecessors, the 15th century explorers, forged their way to the new world.

Today's modern mapmakers use satellite imagery and computer tools to depict the land in astounding detail, from the smallest shrub, to roadways and thoroughfares in Iraq.

The mapmakers of the 555th or the Triple Nickel boast that it's the technology and science of the job that keeps it interesting.

"Most soldiers learn to read maps because of operational obligations, but ask them where the maps were made and you won't get an answer," said Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Corbett, company first sergeant, 555th Eng. Co.

Soldiers stationed in Iraq would agree that if you need a map here you just don't have the opportunity to walk into a nearby corner store and buy one.

"The mapmakers of the Triple Nickel at Camp Victory can make any map soldiers need," said Spc. Betsy Vargas, lithographer.

"We offer more than one map, in fact, I have approximately 300,000 to 400,000 paper maps and when I get finished with ordering we'll be close to a million maps," said Corbett.

"We are the only typographical engineer company in country and we supply all the Coalition Forces in theater," said Staff Sgt. Quatrun Nesbitt, a terrain analyst with Triple Nickel.

Triple Nickel makes and supplies maps to all the coalition members as well as the offices of the CIA, FBI, and all other agencies here in Iraq.

The process of surveying an area isn't complicated, according to Vargas. "The process begins with taking visual pictures of the earth using imagery and then we insert controlling grid lines."

"Using the imagery, the mapmaker's download the satellite images after they're processed through the geo-space analyst computer, which can read down to one meter resolution," said Staff Sgt. Gregory Tenorie, a terrain analyst, non-commissioned officer in charge of the map depot of the Triple Nickel.

The unit uses a sophisticated geographic information system; called "GIS."

GIS is a geo-coded database that can be transformed into lively images embedded with easily compared and updatable facts. The images are then processed into the computer from the satellite.

"GIS means many things, but essentially, it's a computerized mapping system capable of assembling, storing, manipulating, and displaying geographically referenced information," said Tenorie.

In most cases the mapmakers will use an area the size of an airfield, take the



Spc. Betsy Vargas, 555th Engineer Company, rearranges some of the 300,000 to 400,000 maps that triple nickel has in their storage room.

imagery, coordinate and pin point each area, label it and then put all the image and grid information together.

"But the interesting part of the imagery, especially if you need to look at something in detail, is that one can zoom in and out and read it so clear," said Tenorie. "Through the analysis a map can show schools, roads and land structures."

To complete all the work in a timely manner there are four different platoons, which are headquarters, production, survey and terrain.

"The Headquarters Platoon is comprised of the commander, supply and administrative personnel," said Sgt. 1st Class William Yates, platoon sergeant.

Yates coordinates operations in the terrain platoon and is attached to the intelligence C2 cell, which is within the terrain cell working with the CJTF-7 staff.

"The Production Platoon has the high volume map production or HVMP squad and the map depot squad supply Coalition Forces and can produce a thousand copies in 24 hours," said Yates.

Not everyone can request a map, but there are those that will soon realize that having an engineer company in theater to be able to make satellite maps is an advantage. Maps can be made for any reason and requests take two day or less to complete.

"My job here at the terrain cell is to help the survey team to organize all the data to make sure it gets to the other sections," said Yates.

Yates's section can take up to three hours or three days completing the analysis for a map depending on the depth of the analysis and the type of map the customer needs.

For more information on how to make map requests for operational use, units or agencies should call Triple Nickel located at Camp Victory at DSN 318-822-1244.



Spc McKenzie Sharp, and Private 1st Class Catiria Aquino look at a monitor to determine land features for an upcoming report. Aquino performs a daily mission to present analysis to senior leadership officers.

Protective gear proves itself again

Story and photo by
Cpl. Shawn C. Rhodes
1st Marine Division

CAMP MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq - It's heavy, hot and cumbersome. It also saves lives.

Protective gear Marines wear in Iraq is performing as advertised. Helmets, Interceptor vests

with the small-arms protective inserts and even goggles are keeping Marines alive and in the fight in Iraq.

Marines from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, assigned to the 1st Marine Division are eyewitnesses to the effectiveness of the gear.

"We had been ordered to

escort an explosive ordnance team to an (improvised explosive device), and we were en route when the bomb exploded," said Staff Sgt. Jason R. Williams, platoon sergeant for Combined Anti-Armor Team Red at the battalion.

The Snellville, Ga., Marine was in his vehicle when he saw

the explosion ahead of him take the Marines near the blast right off their feet. "The engineers were putting up security around their vehicles while they waited to link up with another unit, and a few of the Marines were right in front of the blast when it happened."

The engineers were caught off guard when the IED exploded near their position, but they

quickly regained control of the situation.

"I saw it when the blast went off," said Sgt. Peter E. Porter, a combat engineer at the scene. "The Marine nearest it disappeared in a cloud of smoke, and I ran to him. When the smoke cleared I saw him on the ground, and I helped him get up and moved him to a safe position in case another attack happened."

In addition to the Marine nearest the blast, Porter, also spotted a Marine lying farther away from the blast.

"The Marine was on his back, and I saw him holding up his hand for help," said the Copperopolis, Calif., Marine. "Some of the shrapnel had hit his leg and his helmet. The shrapnel would have gone straight through him if he hadn't been wearing that helmet."

Marines with CAAT Red were posting security around the site in case of an additional attack, while engineers tended to the wounded.

"I had my goggles over my eyes when the IED went off," explained Lance Cpl. James R. Yakubsin. I was thrown against

my radio in the vehicle and some shrapnel hit my goggles.

"If I hadn't been wearing those, I wouldn't have my eyesight now," added the Gainesville, Fla. Marine.

It isn't the first time Marines in the unit credited their protective gear with saving them from blasts.

"At least a dozen Marines would be dead if not for their protective gear," said Lt. Col. Giles Kyser, 2nd Battalion's commanding officer. "It's proven itself many times.

The Dumfries, Va., Marine added it stands as a good testament to the leadership of the battalion who ensure the Marines are always wearing their gear correctly.

The protective gear the Marines wear stopped bullets and large pieces of shrapnel that cracked the ballistic plate inserts. The only wounds treated are those incurred to the extremities, an area where Marines do not wear as much protection.

"Wearing their gear is keeping the focus on saving lives - keeping their fingers on the trigger," Kyser said.



Peeling away the layers of a ballistic plate, it's easy to see the damage a piece of shrapnel can do - and the life saved of the Marine wearing it. The ballistic plates are inserted in protective vests, which every Marine wears in Iraq.

Firefighters warming up for the real thing



Photo by Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson

Members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps fire department in Mosul, Iraq, put out a fire after completing vehicle rescue extraction training instructed by members of 416th Civil Affairs Battalion, out of Norristown, Pa., on April 18. The Iraqis being trained today will train the civil defense personnel in the Mosul District, Nineveh Province.

Marine fought several days despite gunshot wound

Story and photo by
Cpl. Paula M. Fitzgerald
1st Marine Division

CAMP HURRICANE POINT, Iraq —

Sgt. Kenneth Conde Jr. didn't even realize he was shot until someone told him.

In the mid-afternoon hours of April 6, Conde's unit, 3rd Mobile Assault Platoon, Mobile Assault Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, received orders to help evacuate two casualties from Company G wounded during a firefight in the city of Ar Ramadi.

"There were ambushes going on everywhere," 22-year-old Conde said. "We were able to get to the casualties and get them loaded up into our vehicle."

But in combat, the plan rarely survives first contact. What was supposed to be a simple in-and-out mission rapidly changed when the 27-man platoon came under fire. Machine gunners laid down suppressive fire from the tops of the trucks and cleared a path for the convoy to maneuver.

"The platoon turned down what we call Easy Street," explained the Orlando, Fla., infantryman. "That's when we saw another squad and a company."

Marines down that street were engaged in a vicious gun battle with enemy forces. Shots rang out from every direction. There was no way for Conde's convoy to get through without putting up a fight.

"There were people everywhere and we couldn't really tell where the firing was coming from," he said.

Conde knew the Marines couldn't defeat an unseen enemy. He needed to locate the enemy before destroying him. Rifle in hand, he headed down the street to do just that.

"The insurgents are like ghosts," he said. "They have the element of surprise because they can hide. They see us but we can't see them. I knew we had to get out to see where they were shooting from."

The sergeant called upon Cpl. Jared H. McKenzie and Lance Cpl. Matthew A. Cox to leave their vehicles and follow him to the front of the convoy.

"Wherever Sergeant Conde goes, that's where we go," said

Cox, of Saint Peter's, Mo. "No questions asked. We just follow him."

The three of them darted past the trucks looking for enemy positions on the rooftops.

"We walked up to the third block past the vehicles and spotted a guy shooting at us from one of the rooftops," Conde said. "One of the gunners, Lance Cpl. Matthew Brown, took that building out with his machine gun."

Conde, McKenzie and Cox kept searching for the enemy. They exposed themselves to the fire — the only way they could get a good look at enemy's firing positions. As they pushed forward, Conde was able to take out

two shooters, but then things took a turn for the worse.

"I was running and I watched as I got shot in the left shoulder," Conde said. "I remember seeing a red mist coming from my back."

Even though he saw himself get shot, it didn't occur to Conde to quit fighting.

"I didn't really realize I had been shot until one of the Marines said something," he added.

According to McKenzie, Conde fired several shots, killing a combatant, before falling to the ground. He then managed to get back to his feet and fire a few more rounds at the enemy before

falling again.

"We helped him up so he could get to the corpsman to get bandaged up," McKenzie, 22-year-old from Bonaqua, Tenn. "We made sure to kill the guys who shot him."

The corpsman treated Conde, who only wanted to get his gear and get back to the fight.

Conde's Marines were out there and he knew his place was alongside them.

"We stayed and fought until every one of the insurgents was dead," Conde said.

Before the day was through, 3rd MAP also raided the house of a former Ba'ath Party member and seized a large weapons cache.

Over the next few days, Conde's unit participated in several other firefights until the violence died down. All the while, he nursed his wound, not giving into the pain and refusing to leave his Marines.

Only when his arm went numb, making it difficult to hold his rifle steady, did he finally give in and step out of the fight.

Back at the camp here, Marines asked Conde why he chose to stay and fight even after being shot.

"I told them that I couldn't just leave the fight when I still could keep going," he told them.

But it his actions didn't surprise his fellow Marines.

"He always told us that he would lead us from the front, and that we would never do anything if he wasn't doing it too," Cox explained. "After being in that firefight with him, I will always know that he is true to his word."



During a firefight April 6, Sgt. Kenneth Conde Jr., infantryman with Mobile Assault Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, was shot in the left shoulder. Even after being hit, Conde, of Orlando, Fla., was able to kill an enemy combatant.

Tallil Air Base Religious Worship Services

Worship services are at the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Chapel, unless otherwise noted.

Catholic Daily Mass: Tuesday through Friday, 6 p.m.

Vigil Mass: Saturday, 6 p.m.

Confessions: 5-5:30 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Room

Sunday Mass: 8 a.m.

POC: Chaplain Martin King at 459-0038

Protestant Traditional: Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Liturgical Communion: Sunday, 10:30

Gospel Service: Sunday, 11:45 p.m.

Contemporary Choir practice: Sunday, 6 p.m.

Contemporary Worship: Sunday, 7 p.m.
POC: Chaplain Michael Warner at 459-0038

Latter-Day Saints Lay-Led Service:
Friday, 8 p.m.

POC: Chapel staff, 459-0038

Jewish Lay-Led Service: Friday, 8 p.m.
POC: Chapel staff, 459-0038

Muslim (LSA Adder Chapel) Prayer:
12:30 p.m. and sunset daily

Bible Studies

Women's: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel)

Men's: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Catholic (RCIA) Thurs, 6:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Catholic Sunday, 6:30 p.m. (chapel annex) Men and Women

Thursday 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

LDS Study Thursday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Troops help Ar Ramadi citizens

Story and photos by
Cpl. Paula M. Fitzgerald
1st Marine Division

AR RAMADI, Iraq — A week after some of the bloodiest fighting since major combat operations were declared over last year, Marines from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division returned to the streets here April 14 to extend a helping hand to the city's residents.

Fifteen Marines and scores of enemy combatants were killed during fierce gun battles in the heart of Ar Ramadi throughout the week of April 6. Once the fighting subsided, it was time for the battalion to assist those caught in the middle.

"Not all the people in the city hate us; not all of them are terrorists," said Sgt. Hector A. Osorio, assistant information operations chief. "A lot of them are innocent, and many of them suffered during the fighting."

The battalion abides by the 1st Marine Division motto: No better friend, no worse enemy. Osorio said it was time for the locals to see that Marines can be no better friend, so Operation County Fair III was put into effect.

"Our goal was to provide free medical care to the Iraqis and to give out some toys to the chil-



Navy hospital corpsmen with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division provide medical care to sick and injured citizens during Operation County Fair III. One patient came in with several gunshot wounds, which he received when he was caught in a firefight between Marines and anti-Coalition fighters recently. The "docs" saw almost 30 patients throughout the day.

dren," Osorio, of Houston explained. "We also brought some soccer balls for a pick-up game."



An Iraqi family says hello to Lance Cpl. Jason A. Luna, from Mobile Assault Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. Luna was patrolling the streets here during Operation County Fair III. The event was held April 14 to assist citizens caught in the crossfire between Marines and anti-Coalition fighters recently.

The entire battalion participated in the daylong operation, but not all of the Marines had the opportunity to play soccer with the people here. Some Marines patrolled the streets of the city and provided security, and others searched homes for unlawful weapons and explosives.

"The Marines didn't go busting in doors and forcing themselves into the houses," Osorio added. "They knocked and asked to come in. Most of the people didn't mind and cooperated."

During the searches, Marines seized several illegal weapons and detained four suspected anti-Coalition fighters.

Meanwhile, corpsmen back at the soccer stadium were examining sick and injured men, women and children.

"Our job here is to see how the Iraqi people are doing medically," explained Navy Petty Officer 1st Class David P. Carbungra, from Temcula, Calif. "We want them to see that we really do care about them, and we don't want to hurt them."

In all, the medical team examined nearly 30 patients.

"Most of the problems were minor, like eye injuries," said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class

Danny F. Brown, of Nashville, Tenn. "Some were more serious. There was one guy that came in with several gunshot wounds."

According to patient's brother, the injured man was caught in the middle of a firefight between Marines and insurgents.

"Apparently, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time," Brown said.

The team treated the man to the best of its ability and sent him on his way to recover.

Carbungra said most of the people he saw were appreciative for the care.

"You can see it in their eyes," he added. "The father of an infant girl I treated for an ear

infection looked at me like I had just cured the girl from the terrible pain she's had for more than a week. It just takes a little 'TLC' sometimes to show them we do really want to help."

Most of the people here have limited access to medical care, so a visit from the corpsmen was important, said 22-year-old Omar Turkey Farhan, Ar Ramadi citizen.

"Most everyone likes the Americans being here when they help us," Farhan explained. "We'll be glad when the country is ours again and there's no more fighting, but as long as the Americans want to help us back on our feet, I like them being in Iraq."

Shhhh

Operational Security...

Keep cell phone and email commo free of sensitive information.

You don't know who's listening.

Post-deployment physicals offered to reserve-component Soldiers

Story by Spc. Lorie Jewell
Courtesy of Military.Com

WASHINGTON D.C. — Reserve-component Soldiers going through the process of being released from active duty following deployments are given the option of a physical, a senior Army medical official said.

The physical is in addition to required demobilization-related health assessments required said Col. James Gilman, Chief of Health Policy and services in the Office of the Surgeon General.

A January memorandum from OTSG set out to standardize the exit examination Army-wide, but may have caused some confusion for those not familiar with the other medical requirements of demobilization, Gilman said.

Army policy requires all Soldiers, reserve and active, to complete a DD Form 2796 for a Post-Deployment Health Assessment that assesses deployment-specific issues and have a face-to-face interview with a health care provider upon redeployment. Health care providers arrange additional consultations, examinations, counseling, and testing as appropriate. In addition, reserve-component Soldiers being released from active duty complete a second health assessment, Report of Medical Assessment or DD Form 2697, that is more general in nature. Reservists who do not deploy outside the U.S. still go through these same steps, Gilman said.

“The Surgeon General went beyond that and said that for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, we will provide every reserve-component Soldier a physical before they are off active duty if they want one,” Gilman said. That option has been in place for some time, he added.

In addition to the screenings, health care providers take a blood test from each Soldier that is held in storage in case testing needs to be done at a later time, Gilman said. If they have been out of the country, they also get a Tuberculosis skin

test, he added.

The physical includes taking a Soldier's height, weight, blood pressure, pulse and temperature and a 'hands-on' evaluation of their head, face, scalp, nose, sinuses, mouth, throat, ears (drums), eyes, heart, lungs, vascular system, abdomen, feet, spine, skin, breast and neu-

get home,” Gilman said.

Reserve-component Soldiers are also medically screened before being deployed. Medical records are reviewed and a pre-deployment health assessment DD Form 2795 is completed. Health care providers will refer Soldiers for additional evaluations or testing if necessary, Gilman said.

“The vast majority of the Soldiers who mobilized with significant chronic medical problems were prevented from deploying appropriately,” Gilman said. “As a matter of fact, effective screening contributed to the build-up of the Soldiers in medical holdover status at places like Fort Stewart.”

Of the reserve-component Soldiers who have been medically evacuated from Iraq and Kuwait, about seven percent were because of chronic medical conditions, Gilman said.

“That's what our analysis shows thus far,” Gilman said. “That could be because the conditions may not have been disclosed, or they did not show up during the screening but surfaced later over there.”

There is no way of knowing how many Soldiers with similar chronic conditions successfully completed their deployments, he added.

No screening assessment or examination is infallible, regardless of how elaborate it is, Gilman noted. Still, he believes the Army health care system does its best.

“Our number one job is to take good care of Soldiers,” he said.



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Former school teacher learns Iraqi lessons

Story by Lance Cpl.
Macario P. Mora Jr.
1st Marine Division

CAMP AL QAIM, Iraq - Cpl. Michael Alwardt swapped chalky blackboards in the classroom for greasy guns in the vast desert expanses of western Iraq.

Alwardt is an armory custodian for Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. He's fulfilling a lifelong dream of serving as a Marine in a combat zone. It's a dream the Collinsville, Ill., Marine once shelved to teach in the classroom.

"I decided I wanted to be a Marine when I was in sixth-grade," Alwardt said. "I read about all the services and decided they were the best."

Alwardt instead went to Concordian University in River Forest, Ill., to take advantage of a baseball scholarship. There, he earned a degree in criminal justice and earned his teaching credentials. He set his dreams

of being a Marine on a shelf and took up teaching in Edwardsville, Ill.

"I taught at Metro East Lutheran High School for about a year and a half," said 29-year-old Alwardt. "I then decided it was now or never to become a Marine. My body wasn't getting any younger. I had students and parents of students that were in the military. I had to do it."

The history, geography and physical education teacher drove himself to the nearest recruiting office. Teaching, he said, was the perfect precursor to the Corps.

"My former life has helped me a lot since I've been in," Alwardt said. "In boot-camp they gave me about five different tasks, because they said I was more mature. I've been able to pick things up a little quicker."

According to those around him, such as good friend Lance Cpl. Michael Dressler, the



photo by Sgt. Jose L. Garcia

Cpl. Michael Alwardt, of Collinsville, Ill. and armory custodian for 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's Company K, assembles and disassembles a M-240G machine gun and performs a function check. Alwardt was a teacher for for about a year and a half before enlisting in the Marine Corps.

armory custodian for Headquarters and Service Company, his former life paid dividends to both him and those around him.

"I look up to him," said Dressler, of Olathe, Kan. "He has so much experience and not just in the Marine Corps, but in life. He's a model Marine, everything you'd think a man needed to be in order to serve in the Corps."

"He's so smart," said 1st Lt Rudy G. Salcido, executive officer Company K. "With him I only had to ask things once, often I didn't even have to ask to get things done."

According to the Tucson, Ariz., Marine, the "old man" is great to have around to help the others.

"He's so mature," Salcido said.

Alwardt plans on moving on

from the Corps once his enlistment is up. His plans are to go back to his other passion of teaching in a little more than a year. His time back in the classroom will be enhanced by his service in uniform.

"I told myself I would get out after I had been to war," Alwardt said. "I've now been in two. I've served my country, now it's time for me to move on."

Apache pilots back in Iraq with 1st Cav

Story and photo by
Spec. Andy Miller
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

CAMP COOKE, Iraq - The Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 227th Regiment (Attack Helicopter), "First Attack" are accus-

tomed to hearing about the many firsts in their history. Theirs was the first divisional attack helicopter battalion, the first unit in the Army with the AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters and the first 1st Cavalry Division element deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. After supporting the coalition during the

initial assault on Baghdad, the 1-227 returned to Fort Hood Texas in May 2003.

Now, they're back.

Things are different for 1-227 now that they've returned. Though still a "combat zone," the conditions have changed for these Soldiers compared to the initial assault last March.

Comforts that First Team Soldiers currently enjoy were only a pipe dream for the 1-227 on their first tour. Base camps, post exchanges, dining facilities and showers were not available during the initial push into Baghdad.

"Life's not so bad here. We get some mortars here and there, but they're not that effective. There's a chow hall here. It's not a three MRE day, that's a nice thing," Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shane Colton, an AH-64D Apache pilot said. "We've got good flying and good maintenance. We're well suited for the mission here."

Having already "been there and done that" in Iraq helped prepare the battalion for their second deployment here. The pilots have already experienced the flying conditions and landscape, and the flight crews understand what it takes to

work in the tough Iraqi climate.

"The first time [we were here] Saddam was in power and we thought we were going to get gassed. We were always walking around in MOPP (mission orientated protective posture) Level 2 and always had a mask with us," Spc. David Boyd, an Apache attack helicopter repair technician said. "We didn't have SAPI (small armor protective inserts) plates or anything like that."

Though they have better living conditions and are well prepared, the 1-227 does not necessarily have an easier or safer mission now. Camp Cooke endures occasional mortar and rocket attacks. Maintenance and flying operations can be both unpredictable and dangerous.

The battalion is, nonetheless, an integral part of the division's mission here. Soldiers feel better knowing Apaches are in the skies, Boyd said. The Apaches themselves must seem intimidating to the enemy, who has no aviation assets.

"It's fast and maneuverable as a dart," Boyd said of his aircraft. "We've got a lot of firepower. The thing is basically a floating tank."



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shane Colton performs a pre-flight inspection on an AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter. The Apache Longbow is considered the premier attack helicopter in the US Army's arsenal.

Soldier keeps family tradition alive

Story and photo by
Spc. Sherree Casper
196th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

Priceless.

That's how Cpl. Scott W. Fuhs described a gift given to him for protection by his family just before he deployed to Iraq. The small, simple 18-karat gold crucifix on a silver chain he wears

around his neck dates back more than 85 years.

It has a long, rich military history.

Fuhs, 31, of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a fourth-generation Soldier to wear the crucifix in harm's way. His great-grandfather, grandfather and uncle wore it in previous conflicts dating back to World War I.

All three served with the 1st Infantry Division, as Fuhs is

currently doing.

"No one has ever seen one like it," he said of the crucifix.

Fuhs arrived in Tikrit at Forward Operating Base Danger nearly three months ago with his Kalamazoo, Mich.-based Army Reserve unit, the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion. The battalion is attached to the 1st ID.

Last century, the crucifix was worn by his relatives who saw combat twice in Europe as well as Southeast Asia and now, Fuhs is wearing it in Southwest Asia with the Big Red One.

"They figured it is a well-traveled cross and needs to see another continent," Fuhs said.

Had it not been for Fuhs' great-grandmother's concern for her war-bound husband's safety, there never would have been a cherished family heirloom to begin with.

In 1917, before his great-grandfather boarded a ship in New York for France to serve in World War I, great-grandma, Ada M. Mayo, gave her husband, Fredrick J. Mayo, the gold crucifix, according to family lore. She purchased the keepsake for an unknown price from a jeweler in Michigan.

Her husband was a cavalry and infantry captain in France. He returned home safely, Fuhs said.

When Fuhs' grandfather, George E. Wiersma, was drafted to serve during World War II, the Mayo's gave their son-in-law the crucifix. Fuhs said while serving from 1943 to 1946 as an Army signalman, Wiersma trav-

eled to Normandy. He missed the D-Day invasion by a few days.

Wiersma's son, John, had the crucifix with him when he was shipped to Thailand in 1967 with the Army Corps of Engineers during the Vietnam War.

John Wiersma didn't take it off until last Thanksgiving Day. It was then that he passed the crucifix to his nephew who was being deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"My grandfather and Uncle John both felt I deserved to have it," Fuhs said. "I felt honored, very surprised. I'm among good company."

Born and raised Catholic, he said he gets a "good feeling" from wearing the crucifix. That's why he hopes to continue the tradition by one day passing it down to a relative who is in the military.

"I feel that it needs to stay in the family, in the military," he said.

Fuhs wears the crucifix alongside a pewter medallion engraved with three patron saints of the military - St. George, St. Michael and St. Christopher. Embedded in the center of the medallion is the Virgin Mary. The word "Land" is in red on the top left side, "Air" in white on the top right with the words "Sea" and "USA" in blue across the bottom.

His mother, Carol, gave it to him before he deployed to Iraq.

Mother and son were shop-

ping at Isdories Religious store in Grand Rapids, Mich., shortly after Veterans Day last year when the pair found the piece of jewelry. Fuhs said his mother wanted to give him something appropriate for a Soldier. So they were looking for patron saints of the military.

Coincidentally, they bumped into a Korean War veteran who was also in the shop. Fuhs said the man pointed out the medallion.

"He said it was one designed specifically for the military so that's the one we chose," Fuhs said.

He is a 1996 graduate of Grand Valley State University in Michigan who majored in history and political science. A former warehouse supervisor, Fuhs joined the Army Reserve in November 2002.

Military life apparently suits Fuhs, who has considered making it a fulltime career. There's one stipulation - he wants to stay in Army civil affairs.

"I love the challenges," he said. "It's a whole different world."

So is Iraq, where there is a lot of uncertainty and danger. But the crucifix provides him with a sense of security, Fuhs said. It protected his relatives in previous conflict and now is protecting him, he said.

"I feel very safe when wearing this cross," he said. "Knowing that this cross has been many places with very special people before me, I intend to pass it down someday"



Cpl. Scott W. Fuhs, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, displays the crucifix given to him by his family for protection. Fuhs is the fourth generation Soldiers to wear the crucifix into harms way.



Photo by Sgt. April Johnson

Iraqi Police and Soldiers work together

Members of the Dibbis Police Department and Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery walk down a street on 18 Apr 2004 in the village of Qarah Tappah, Iraq. The purpose of the mission was to locate and confiscate any illegal contraband that could be used against coalition forces.



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